

# Reviewing U.S. Role on World Stage

## A Capital Interview With Senator Fulbright

By Courtney Sheldon

WASHINGTON  
Senator James William Fulbright of Arkansas—a thoroughgoing scholar on foreign affairs, a persistent critic of the Eisenhower foreign policies, and now in a strategic position as chairman of the influential Senate Foreign Relations Committee—says:

- "The more dangerous area to us is in the nonmilitary [when it is a question of the relative importance of military and economic aid]."
- The President's requests for foreign aid "are very modest relative to the need."
- "Our international manners are often atrocious."
- "Our whole country has not recognized our proper role."
- "I have felt in the past that we [Secretary Herter and I] . . . judge the world and many of our problems in a somewhat similar manner."
- "I rather regret the size of the United Nations now. It grew too fast."

Of the numerous East-West differences, Senator Fulbright, are there any you feel could be discussed now at a summit meeting with some hope of accord?

Well, Mr. Sheldon, I am not particularly optimistic about reaching any solutions in the first, or even the second meeting. My approach is rather that these matters need to be solved, and that we should start talking about them and find out if there is any hope for an adjustment of our differences.

I would prefer emphasis upon the established diplomatic channels, but the Russians seem disinclined to do that and therefore they wish this procedure. I'm perfectly willing to go along with that.

By regular diplomatic channels you are referring to ambassadorial relations?

Yes, I would hope that our ambassadors could carry on constant negotiations with the Russians.

For some reason or other the Russians seem to be extremely reluctant to enter into serious negotiations over the settlement of such things as the Berlin business or the Middle East. It leads one to suspect their motives. And I have grave doubt whether the Russians really want to compose these differences.

But those doubts, in my opinion, do not justify refusing to enter into summit discussions. Now it may be they only want to make propaganda, but I don't know why we cannot make propaganda the same as they do. On the other hand, they are peculiar people and maybe they will gradually consent to serious negotiations. All I am saying is that we ought to find out what they are doing and pursue opportunities to find out.

When you mentioned regular diplomatic channels were you referring to all to the UN?

Well, it can be used in certain circumstances, but it is a rather awkward organization. It has so many members now. I think it has really gotten too large. I rather regret the size of the UN now. It grew too fast in size before we had perfected its procedures and established traditions that would support orderly procedure. I won't wish to abandon it, of course. I think it is still a hopeful organization.

Would you cite some of the specific differences that you feel could be usefully negotiated now?

Well, the most immediate ones, of course, are the status of West Berlin and Germany and the so-called nuclear ban,

at least on the restricted basis that has recently been brought forward as a kind of salvage operation, the one which does not require extensive monitoring within the adversary's country.

The Western proposal for a ban on atmospheric tests only?

That certainly is a possibility, and the discussion of the Middle East is a possibility. I see no reason to exclude any of our differences. These are discussions in the first instance. I don't think we should expect solutions growing out of a meeting immediately. I think it is more of an exploratory discussion to feel one another out.

You are not at all opposed to what is called an open agenda then?

No, I think it should be an open agenda. They waste more time trying to decide an agenda than anything else. If they don't wish to talk about anything seriously or relevant, why adjourn. We have at least proved that we are not afraid to sit down and talk. I think this reluctance to have a talk has created the impression we're afraid of them, and that we have no ideas and no policy.

I realize there has been a very persuasive argument made that they are adept at propaganda, and that they will use a meeting merely to embarrass us. Well, that is another way of saying we are so

stupid we don't know how to make propaganda or how to combat it. If we are, we had better learn. I think it is that kind of world and we have to accept it.

What do you regard, Senator Fulbright, as the notable successes and failures of the administration on foreign policy in the last seven years?

Well, I think the highly unsatisfactory state of our international relations and the tension that exists throughout certainly the Middle East at the moment, and existed only recently in the Far East, would indicate that the successes have not been very great or notable.

I don't mean to leave the implication that the administration is entirely to blame. I think the people, our whole country, has not recognized our proper role and we have not applied ourselves.

But to be more specific, as you know I took serious issue with the so-called Eisenhower doctrine. I opposed it, spoke against it, worked against it. I was also highly critical of the decision of the Secretary [Dulles] on the Aswan Dam proposal, that is our relations with Nasser. I think it was poorly handled, and I think his judgment at the time of Russian strength and activity was not based upon realities.

I suppose you could say our most satisfactory relations at the moment have been with Germany. The preservation, at least, of a fairly high degree of unity among the NATO partners, I believe, would be regarded as the most successful area of activity. The preservation of reasonably good relations with Japan is also a successful area.

Of course, I think the deterioration of our Latin-American relations is another example of failure, largely of neglect. I don't know anything positive that we have done that has alienated them. We just haven't done anything affirmative to conciliate them and make them feel we are interested in them. In this case I think it is not so much a material matter. It is an attitude, a matter of good manners. Regarding them as important people, and being courteous to them is very essential. Our international manners are often atrocious.

What would you say has been the trend of American prestige and influence in the world recently?

I think it has clearly declined. We have presented an image, a picture, of inde-



Senator James William Fulbright

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cision, I think, of inconsistency. We talk one way and we act another in many instances, notably in the field of trade and tariffs. I think very often our statements have not been realistic. We have not been able to live up to them. I think we have talked too much and been too brash in some of our statements.

*Do you feel that the appointment of Mr. Herter as Secretary of State is going to change this trend?*

I have great respect for Mr. Herter's integrity and his capacity. He has had long experience and I am very pleased with his appointment. I look forward to working with him as closely as I can, and I hope that we continue to agree on many of the basic factors that afflict us. I have felt in the past that we have a good deal in common, that is in our attitudes, that we judge the world and many of our problems in a somewhat similar manner.

*On the question of the mutual security program, do you favor giving the President the full amount asked for the program?*

My amendments request a good deal more for the development loan fund than he asked. I think his requests are very modest relative to the need.

*This is economic aid you are talking about?*

Yes.

*If there were to be a cutback in mutual security, you would prefer it to be in the military rather than the economic?*

I would as a matter of relative threat to our security in coming years, if you have to make a choice. The more dangerous area to us is in the nonmilitary.